UNITED
NATIONS

A S

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/50/354
S/1995/696
14 August 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fiftieth session
Item 114 (c) of the
provisional agenda*
HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN
RIGHTS SITUATIONS AND REPORTS
OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS AND
REPRESENTATIVES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fiftieth year

Letter dated 14 August 1995 from the Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of a letter dated 14 August 1995 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, Mr. Mate Granić, addressed to you (see annex).

I would kindly request your kind assistance in distributing the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under item 114 (c) of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mario NOBILO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/50/150.

95-23945 (E) 140895 150895

/...

ANNEX

Letter dated 14 August 1995 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Croatia addressed to the Secretary-General

It is with utmost concern and profound distress that I must draw your attention to the plight of thousands of innocent civilians, especially of Croatian ethnic origin, who are being systematically subjected to terror and forcible expulsion from their homes in the "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)", particularly in the Vojvodina region. Similar events are also occurring in the remaining occupied territories in Croatia in the Vukovar region, as well as in areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina under Bosnian Serb control, especially in the region of Banja Luka. It must be stressed that those regions are not areas of conflict.

The ethnic Croats living in the territory of the "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)", who are an indigenous population, have no desire to relinquish their ancestral homes or their property. They have not engaged in any subversive or illegal activities but have been peaceful, law-abiding citizens. The only reason they are being subjected to extreme pressures, including bodily harm and murder, and forcibly evicted (in some cases with a quarter of an hour's advance notice) is because of their ethnic origin.

It is an established fact that the authorities of the "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)" extend no protection to the Croatian families and their property, taking advantage of the fact that there is no adequate international monitoring of developing situation. There is no doubt that the refusal, in 1993, of the "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)" to extend the missions of long duration to Kosovo, Vojvodina and the Sandžak of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) (now the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)), was undertaken, in part, to facilitate the forcible exodus of non-Serbs, especially Croats.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia has information that indicates that the Croatian ethnic community is being subjected to "ethnic cleansing" accompanied by destruction of cultural monuments belonging to the Croatian ethnic community in the Vojvodina province of Serbia. Ethnic Croats are being forcibly evicted from many towns in Vojvodina, including Novi Slankamen, Kukujevci, Nikinci, Beges, Novi Banovci, Ruma, Petrovaradin and Sremska Mitrovica. Reports from reputable human rights organizations and international media state that homes of ethnic Croats have been marked and that ethnic Croats are being brutally thrown out from their homes. These same sources report that this behaviour is conducted systematically and apparently encouraged by the authorities, as evidenced by the fact that the attackers have been provided with lists containing addresses and telephones of ethnic Croats and that police rarely or never intervene.

It should be pointed out that under the current laws of the "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)" - as repeatedly publicly stated by the Minister for Minorities of the Belgrade regime, Margit Savović - the

Croatian ethnic community in the "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)" does not exist on the grounds that the "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)" does not recognize the Republic of Croatia. Therefore, under existing Belgrade policies, no minority and - evidently - no human rights protection is extended to the Croatian ethnic community in the "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)".

The Government of the Republic of Croatia stresses that these appalling practices of the Government in Belgrade flow parallel to the activities of the local Serb authorities in the remaining occupied Croatian territories - the Vukovar region (Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srijem), which are presently under the effective military and other rule of the Belgrade regime, as well as in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina under the control of Bosnian Serb authorities, particularly in the region of Banja Luka. The "ethnic cleansing" of ethnic Croats and Bosniacs in these regions, which has been occurring for many months, continues unabated and without any real attempt by the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO) and the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as international humanitarian and other organizations to take effective preventive measures.

The Croat population in the remaining occupied territory of Croatia, in which non-Serbs constituted an absolute majority before the war, is being subjected to physical intimidation and direct pressure to leave their ancestral homes.

As to the appalling human rights situation in the region of Banja Luka, I can report that, according to data available to the Government of Croatia, over 1,000 Bosnian Croat families have been expelled in the last few days. We have information - confirmed by officials of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) - that numerous Bosnian Croats and Muslims have been tortured and killed, often in the most barbaric and sadistic manner. All these activities have occurred with the assistance of or at least tolerated by the local Bosnian Serb police. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has informed the Government of the Republic of Croatia that as many as 6,000 Croats in Banja Luka are in a serious life-threatening situation and should be evacuated immediately.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia is concerned that the magnitude of the human rights abuses against ethnic Croats in the "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)" as well as in the remaining occupied territories of Croatia and in the parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina controlled by Serbs will increase and that this can only raise tensions and hinder the establishment of a lasting peace in the region. Therefore, we call upon the Security Council and humanitarian and other international organizations to take the necessary decisions and concrete steps to avert the human rights catastrophe that is in the making.

(Signed) Mate GRANIĆ
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Foreign Affairs